

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VALLET 00139 011759Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 011645Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7921
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSKAK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0139

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRIEFING FOR FRONT LINE
OBSERVERS

1. AMB YOUNG, DICK MOOSE AND STEVE LOW, JOINED BY
JOHNNY GRAHAM OF BRITISH DELEGATION, MET FOR TWO HOURS
WITH CONFERENCE OBSERVERS FROM MOZAMBIQUE, TANZANIA,
ANGOLA EVENING JANUARY 31 TO BRIEF THEM ON AFTERNOON'S
RESTRICTED MEETING. DISCUSSION WAS LIVELY, INFORMAL
AND FRIENDLY, WITH OBSERVERS SEEKING TO GAIN PRECISE
UNDERSTANDING OF OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES AND POSSIBLE
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AREAS OF AGREEMENT.

2. MOZAMBIKANS AGAIN TOOK LEAD IN PRESSING FOR
PROMINENT PATRIOTIC FRONT ROLE IN TRANSITIONAL
POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS BASED ON "MORAL LEGITIMACY"
PF HAS ACQUIRED IN WAGING ARMED STRUGGLE.
OTHER OBSERVERS, NOTABLY TANZANIAN KATIKAZA

ADDED SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS (E.G., THE HISTORICAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY ROLES OF ZANU AND ZAPU) TO JUSTIFY A SPECIAL ROLE FOR THE PF DURING THE TRANSITION, REFUSING, HOWEVER, TO BE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT THE ACTUAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ROLE SHOULD BE. KATIKAZA ASKED WHETHER PF HAD IN COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT OTHER PARTIES WERE ENTITLED TO SOME PARTICIPATION IN INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND SUGGESTED THAT IF THIS WERE AGREED, FORMULA FOR REPRESENTATION MIGHT THEN BE LEFT TO PARTIES THEMSELVES TO WORK OUT RATHER THAN HAVING UK MAKE ARBITRARY ALLOCATION.

3. US AND UK REPS EXPLAINED THAT AFTERNOON SESSION HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN PERMITTING EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSITION PERIOD, MANY OF WHICH WERE BEING DISCUSSED DIRECTLY WITH PF FOR FIRST TIME. DESPITE THE EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, US AND UK WERE STILL UNCLEAR WHETHER PF'S CONTINUED INSISTENCE ON MONOPOLY OF POLITICAL POWER DURING TRANSITION WAS UNALTERABLE OR MERLY THEIR OPENING NEGOTIATING BID. IF LATTER, WE WOULD HAVE HOPED BY NOW TO SEE SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD COMPROMISE. IF, HOWEVER, IT IS PF'S FIRM AND FINAL OFFER, THEN NEGOTIATIONS SEEM HEADED FOR INEVITABLE IMPASSE. GRAHAM OUTLINED CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR THE OBSERVERS UK'S PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE A GOVERNING COUNCIL WITH LIMITED LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND CHARACTERIZED IT AS SIGNIFICANT UK CONCESSIONS TO PF'S DEMANDS AND CONCERNS WHICH FL OBSERVERS ACKNOWLEDGED. THEY ASKED WHETHER THIS WAS FINAL POSITION. GRAHAM EXPRESSED REGRET THAT PF HAD ONLY CRITICIZED THE NEW PROPOSAL WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING BRITISH EFFORT TO BE ACCOMMODATING.

4. YOUNG AND LOW MADE NO ATTEMPT TO DISGUSE GROWING U.S. FRUSTRATION OVER INABILITY TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH PF ON BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR A SETTLEMENT. REITERATING IMPERATIVE THAT ANY SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL MUST BE BALANCED AND FAIR IN ORDER TO GAIN UK, US AND INTERNATIONAL ENDORSEMENT, THEY LET OBSERVERS KNOW THAT PF'S CONTINUED INSISTENCE OF DIRECT TRANSFER OF POWER TO THEM THREATENED TO MAKE NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IMPOSSIBLE, LEAVING CONTINUED FIGHTING, WITH ALL ITS ATTENDANT CONSEQUENCES, AS ONLY REMAINING ALTERNATIVE. US AND UK WERE PREPARED TO DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO ASSURE AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS LEADING TO MAJORITY RULE BUT COULD NOT GIVE ANY

PARTY A DOMINANT ROLE. IN PART AS TACTICAL PLOY
TO UNDERScore LIKELY CONSEQUENCES, YOUNG COMMENTED
THAT THE CONTINUED CONFUSION AMONG NATIONALISTS
AND RESULTANT IMPASSE ON RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT
LEAD U.S. TO CONCLUDE THAT ITS BEST INTERESTS LIE
IN DISENGAGING ALTOGETHER.

5. COMMENT: IT WAS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE HOW
MUCH OF AN IMPACT OUR ASSESSMENT OF PRESENT
SITUATION MADE ON THE FL OBSERVERS, ALL OF WHOM
REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON HOW AN IMPASSE MIGHT BE
AVOIDED. BUT THEY COULD NOT MISREAD OUR BELIEF THAT FL
STATES HAVE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONVINCING PF OF
NEED TO BE REASONALBE. LAINGEN.
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